

Parents and Adults Inspiring Reading Success (PAIRS) Success Update

Submitted to Public Awareness Subcommittee, September 2007

Overview

Launched in February 2005, Parents and Adults Inspiring Reading Success (PAIRS) is a project of SC's daily newspapers and is administered as a public awareness initiative of the SC Education Oversight Committee.

The mission of PAIRS is to encourage and support the achievement of reading literacy on grade level for every child in South Carolina. With an intense focus on grades three through eight, the initiative seeks to energize broad collaboration and involvement in local communities (ie., extended learning opportunities, mentoring programs, faith-based programs, literacy initiatives, etc.)

As outlined in the initiative's bylaws (Appendix A), the guiding principles of PAIRS follow:

- Reading is essential for success in school and life.
- Young people learn best when nurturing, caring adults provide motivation and support.
- The future of all South Carolinians depends on our ability to help our students reach their potential.

The purposes are

1. to identify and recruit affiliate organizations promoting reading and literacy among adults and young people;
2. to facilitate connections between affiliate organizations, providing them support to enhance their individual missions;
3. to promote opportunities that support the creation of new reading programs;
4. to develop communication, marketing, and research materials; and
5. to support activities involving reading and literacy statewide.

The initiative emerged as a result of "Conversations with the EOC" in every county of South Carolina, held from September 2003-April 2004. These meetings identified a critical need for all citizens to actively reinforce and support the mission of schools, particularly in the area of reading. The three areas of identified consensus formed the guiding principles of the initiative, which are listed above.

The need for PAIRS was reinforced in 2005 when research showed an almost one-to-one correlation between reading proficiency and on-time high school graduation. South Carolina ranks last among states in graduation rates, graduating only 48 percent of 9th graders in four years.¹

In 2004, only 27 percent of 5th graders and 25 percent of 7th graders scored Proficient on the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test (PACT), meaning they are well-prepared for work at the next grade level. Many of these students do not acquire the reading skills they need to prepare

¹ The high school graduation variable was defined as the percent of the 1999-2000 9th grade 135 ADM who received diplomas (does not include those receiving certificates) three years later in 2002-2003.
http://www.scpairs.org/PDF/Harry_Miley_Exec_Summary.pdf.

them for graduation and beyond. The research suggests that only half of those in the ninth grade today will ever graduate from high school.

The study also showed that for every ten additional students we can help to reach reading proficiency on the PACT, at least eight will graduate. A large part of a student's success in the classroom depends on their contact with adults who encourage and inspire them to read outside of the classroom. Providing a catalyst by which greater awareness is placed on literacy and the importance of adult/child relationships is at the heart of the PAIRS initiative.

Update to PAIRS Two-Year Status Report

In February 2007, the EOC approved the submission of the *PAIRS Two-Year Status Report*. The report summarized two years of work of the initiative. It was organized around the purposes outlined in the bylaws and also outlined future directions for the initiative. The following report updates the committee on the progress of the initiative from February 2007 to September 2007.

Purpose 1: to identify and recruit affiliate organizations promoting reading and literacy among adults and young people.

Affiliate membership in PAIRS is open to not-for-profit programs and individuals who concur with the mission and goals of PAIRS and act to implement the mission and goals. Programs and individuals who meet criteria are open to join PAIRS as Affiliate members. The cost of membership is free and EOC/PAIRS staff keeps signed commitment statements on file.

Currently, there are 103 PAIRS Affiliates, an increase of seven programs since February. Fifty-eight affiliates are programs and 45 are individual members. Currently, 22 counties have met the stated goal, which is to have two affiliates in each county. In February, 20 counties had met the goal. A breakdown of the affiliates by county is attached in Appendix B.

The Advisory Board, which advises and supports PAIRS implementation statewide and in local communities, is composed of 16 individuals, who represent the publishers of the 16 daily newspapers. These individuals meet quarterly. Current advisory board members are: Steven Brandt, *Greenville News*; Henry Haitz, *The State*; Anthony Summerlin, *Union Daily Times*; Valerie Canepa, *Rock Hill Herald*; Milton Miles, *The Sun News*; Kim Buckner-Land, *Spartanburg Herald-Journal*; William Collins, *Greenwood Index-Journal*; Larry Tarleton, *Charleston Post and Courier*; Cathy Hughes, *Orangeburg Times and Democrat*; Joni Weerheim, *Seneca Daily Journal*; Fred Foster, *Anderson Independent-Mail*; Jack Osteen, *Sumter Item*; and Scott Hunter, *Aiken Standard*. Mark Laskowski, Publisher of the *Florence Morning News*, and Beth Patton, Marketing Director at the *Island Packet/ Beaufort Gazette*, have recently joined the Advisory Board. In June, the *Bluffton Today* newspaper began daily publication; PAIRS staff is working to recruit Larry G. Miller, Publisher of the two-year old paper, to join the advisory board.

Purpose 2: to facilitate connections between affiliate organizations, providing them support to enhance their individual missions.

Connections and partnerships continue to be critical to the success of PAIRS. Partnership in PAIRS is open to organizations with a commitment to literacy and with whom a formalized relationship would benefit PAIRS Affiliate programs, or organizations with similar or overlapping services.

Current, active partners include the SC Afterschool Alliance, Harvest Hope Food Bank, SC Center for Children's Books and Literacy, University of South Carolina School of Library and Information Science, SC State Library, Allen University, and the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, SC 7th Episcopal District.

The South Carolina Center for Children's Books and Literacy (SCCCBL) is an outreach program of the *University of SC School of Library and Information Science*. It is designed to enhance existing literacy programs, provide literacy research specific to South Carolina, and train teachers and daycare workers, parents and others. Recently, a letter (Appendix C) was sent out to the leaders of all Rotary Clubs around the state, offering a program with a message from PAIRS staff and the staff of the SC Center for Children's Books and Literacy. Literacy is a key component of the mission of Rotary International and as outlined in the invitation to rotaries, the program has three main objectives: 1.) provide information on the relationship between literacy and success in school, life, and economic development; 2.) instill a sense of urgency about the importance of literacy at each stage of a child's life; and 3.) challenge Rotarians as individuals and as an organization to utilize their influence and resources to act and assist the students of South Carolina.

The partnership with PAIRS with *Allen University* and the *SC 7th Episcopal District of the AME Church* on the *Allen Reading Initiative* is not currently in operation. Dr. Wanda Fernandopulle, the Director of the Initiative, resigned from Allen in November 2006, and since that time the school has not been involved in the support of the 14 AME churches involved in the initiative's pilot. The programs continue to be supported as PAIRS Affiliate programs, receiving resources related to the literacy component of their programs.

Although staff of the daily newspapers compose the Advisory Board of the initiative, they also partner and provide to the affiliate programs. For example, PAIRS Affiliate programs have benefited from free class subscriptions to *The State* paper on two occasions. *The State's* Newspapers in Education (NIE) program offers class sets of newspapers to public school classrooms to be used for educational purposes. They have recently seen the benefit of offering these resources to out-of-school time programs. NIE staff have also offered to provide free training to affiliate staff on using the newspaper as a learning tool for all grade levels.

Purpose 3: To promote opportunities that support the creation of new reading programs.

In October 2005, the publication *How to Start an Effective Out-of-School-Time Program in South Carolina* was published as a project of PAIRS and the South Carolina Afterschool Alliance (SCAA). The guide is an excellent resource for individuals wanting to start a program or enhance an existing program. Literacy resources are included within the guide. Since publication of the guide, PAIRS staff has tried to develop training to accompany it with staff of the SC Afterschool Alliance. Lack of staff at the SCAA has consistently presented a barrier in keeping the trainings from occurring. In September 2007, the SCAA will double their staff by adding two staff persons to serve as regional coordinators.

Purpose 4: To develop communication, marketing, and research materials.

In addition to the aforementioned program with the SC Center for Children's Books and Literacy, PAIRS staff has continued the publication of the quarterly *Connections* newsletter.

In May, PAIRS staff began a moderated listserv for affiliates to communicate with one another. The listserv is hosted by the SC Chief Information Office (CIO) and can be accessed online at the PAIRS website, www.SCPAIRS.org.

Staff from PAIRS and the SC Afterschool Alliance (SCAA) are also working collaboratively to bring *Afterschool Academies* to South Carolina this year and offer it to PAIRS Affiliates and individuals within the SCAA network. The *Academies* program offer programming and practice in the core approaches and methods of effective extended learning time education. Funding is provided by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.

Staff is also working with partners on the potential of using ETV resources to offer literacy related professional development to PAIRS Affiliates online. Out-of-school time program staff and child care providers often do not have the time to attend workshops during the week or weekends – these types of “accessible-anytime” activities would be beneficial to providers.

Purpose 5: To support activities involving reading and literacy statewide.

In May 2007, a follow-up to the successful “Summer Reading” supplement pilot was published. The goal of the supplement was to showcase the power of great books, particularly during the summer months, and to reach students and adults in the community who interact with students.

This year’s supplement was published in six daily newspapers: *Florence Morning News*, *Myrtle Beach Sun News*, *Orangeburg Times and Democrat*, *Seneca Daily Journal*, *Union Daily Times*, and *Spartanburg Herald-Journal*.

Details of the distribution of the supplement include:

- 228,000 total copies of the “Summer Reading” inserts were printed. Total circulation in the daily newspapers was 189,881.
- The EOC investment was identical to the investment made in the 2006 pilot project. Each of the six participating newspapers printed their own supplement at their own print shops and invested money in the production of the project. *The Florence Morning News* handled the printing and distribution of the overrun copies.
- 300 copies of the “Summer Reading” inserts were distributed to school district offices statewide, for use in summer school. Each shipment contained an order form so that districts needing additional copies could order directly from *The Florence Morning News*.
- Each of the PAIRS Affiliates received 50 copies of the “Summer Reading” insert.
- 50 Summer Reading sections were delivered to every public library in the state.
- 5,000 additional copies of the supplement were printed for additional requests.
- A teacher’s guide to the supplement was provided free of charge to educators upon request.

This fall, PAIRS staff will work with representatives from the SC State Library, University of SC School of Library and Information Science, and Newspapers in Education (NIE) staff from around the state to consider partnering and increasing the effectiveness of this project in 2008.

Appendixes

Appendix A

By-Laws of Parents and Adults Inspiring Reading Success (PAIRS)

Article I: Name

The name of the organization is Parents and Adults Inspiring Reading Success, hereafter referred to as "PAIRS".

Article II: Mission and Purpose

The mission of PAIRS is to encourage and support the achievement of reading literacy on grade level, with an intense focus on grades three through eight for every child in South Carolina by energizing broad collaboration and involvement in local communities (ie., extended learning opportunities, mentoring programs, literacy initiatives, etc.)

The guiding principles of PAIRS shall be:

- Reading is essential for success in school and life.
- Young people learn best when nurturing, caring adults provide motivation and support.
- The future of all South Carolinians depends on our ability to help our students reach their potential.

The purposes of PAIRS shall be:

1. to identify and recruit affiliate organizations promoting reading and literacy among adults and young people;
2. to facilitate connections between affiliate organizations, providing them support to enhance their individual missions;
3. to promote opportunities that support the creation of new reading programs;
4. to develop communication, marketing, and research materials; and
5. to support activities involving reading and literacy statewide.

Article III: Advisory Board

Section 1: The Advisory Board shall consist of one elected chair, as well as appointed members as described in Article III. The Chair will be elected annually among board members at the last board meeting of the calendar year.

Section 2: The Advisory Board shall advise and support PAIRS implementation statewide and in local communities.

No member of the PAIRS Advisory Board, or newspapers, shall derive any personal profit or gain, directly or indirectly, by reason of his or her participation with PAIRS. Each individual shall disclose to the PAIRS Advisory Board any personal interest which he or she may have in any matter pending before the PAIRS Advisory Board and shall refrain from participation in any decision on such matter.

Section 3: The PAIRS Board should be composed of the Publishers of South Carolina's daily newspapers.

Section 4: The Advisory Board shall advance the purpose of PAIRS directly or through its designees.

Section 5: The PAIRS Advisory Board shall meet at least twice a year, in person or by way of telephone conference.

Section 6: Bylaws may be amended at any board meeting by a majority of those present.

Article IV: Organization

Section 1: PAIRS is administered by the SC Education Oversight Committee (EOC).

Section 2: An appointed Advisory Board shall advise and support PAIRS implementation statewide and in local communities.

The PAIRS Advisory Board is composed of the Publisher from each of the daily newspapers in South Carolina. If the Publisher is not able to participate, a senior staff member shall be designated.

Section 3: The street address of PAIRS is: 1105 Pendleton Street, Blatt Building, Suite 227, Columbia, SC 29211

Article V: Affiliates and Partners

Section 1. *Affiliate Membership* in PAIRS shall be open to not-for-profit programs that concur with the mission and goals of PAIRS and act to implement the mission and goals.

PAIRS Affiliate members must pledge that their represented group does not discriminate based on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, or handicap in its practices related to employment or establishment and administration of its programs and initiatives.

Affiliate Meetings. There shall be one General Membership Meeting (e.g., PAIRS Summit) per year, at the time, place, and discretion of the Advisory Board.

- Section 2.** *Partnership in PAIRS* is open to organizations:
1. with a commitment to literacy and with whom a formalized relationship would benefit PAIRS Affiliate Programs (e.g., Allen University, USC);
 2. with similar or overlapping services (e.g., SC Afterschool Alliance)

- Section 3.** *Associate Status* in PAIRS is open to organizations:
1. with services or products which would benefit PAIRS Affiliates.

Participation does not constitute an endorsement by PAIRS. The PAIRS Advisory Board must approve all partnerships and requests for Associate Status.

Current dated 6/20/05

Appendix B

County	No. Affiliates	No. Individual Affiliates	Met Goal	
Abbeville	0	0	N	
Aiken	1	0	N	
Allendale	0	0	N	
Anderson	0	0	N	
Bamberg	0	0	N	
Barnwell	1	1	Y	
Beaufort	3	3	Y	
Berkeley	0	0	N	
Calhoun	1	0	N	
Charleston	3	2	Y	
Cherokee	0	0	N	
Chester	0	0	N	
Chesterfield	0	0	N	
Clarendon	3	3	Y	
Colleton	1	1	Y	
Darlington	0	0	N	
Dillon	2	2	Y	
Dorchester	1	1	Y	
Edgefield	0	0	N	
Fairfield	0	0	N	
Florence	1	12	Y	
Georgetown	3	1	Y	Total # of Affiliates: 58
Greenville	10	0	Y	Total # of Individual Affil: 45
Greenwood	2	0	Y	
Hampton	0	0	N	Total: 103
Horry	0	0	N	
Jasper	2	5	Y	Counties Met Goal: 22
Kershaw	2	0	N	Counties Not Met Goal: 24
Lancaster	0	0	N	
Laurens	0	0	N	
Lee	0	0	N	
Lexington	3	2	Y	
Marion	2	2	Y	
Marlboro	0	0	N	
McCormick	0	0	N	
Newberry	0	0	N	
Oconee	0	0	N	
Orangeburg	1	1	Y	
Pickens	1	0	N	
Richland	10	6	Y	
Saluda	0	0	N	
Spartanburg	1	1	Y	
Sumter	2	1	Y	
Union	0	0	N	
Williamsburg	2	1	Y	
York	0	0	N	

current 12/18/06

Appendix C

August 3, 2007

Name
Rotary Club
Address 1
Address 2
City, State, Zip

Dear Salutation:

How can we assist young people today reach their full potential and become successful members of society? As a Rotarian, you understand the importance of bringing clarity and understanding to this question and how community volunteerism fits into the answer.

The leadership of Rotary International has consistently recognized literacy as a critical component to individual success. A call to action is necessary in our state. Unfortunately, fewer students graduate on-time in our state than in any other state in the nation. Many South Carolina students are not reading at the level necessary to complete high school, to be successful in school and life -- and to experience the enjoyment of being life-long readers and learners.

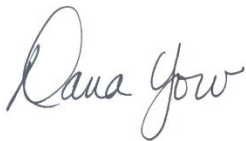
Research studies document a correlation between reading proficiency and on-time graduation. Student success is higher when out-of-school activities reinforce and extend learning acquired in school. South Carolina's young people need reinforcement in reading initially and critically as they encounter more demanding material.

Parents and Adults Inspiring Reading Success (PAIRS), a public awareness initiative of the SC Education Oversight Committee, directed by the publishers of South Carolina's 16 daily newspapers, and the South Carolina Center for Children's Books and Literacy at the University of South Carolina, have a message we would like to share with Rotary groups around the state. Our 20-minute presentation has three objectives:

- (a) Provide information on the relationship between literacy and success in school, life and economic development;
- (b) Instill a sense of urgency about the importance of literacy at each stage of a child's life; and
- (c) Challenge you as an individual and as an organization to utilize your influence and resources to act and assist the students of South Carolina.

Please contact one of us if your group is able to work us into your program schedule. Our contact information is listed below under our signatures.

Sincerely,



Dana Yow
Director of Communications
Education Oversight Committee / PAIRS
Phone: 803-734-6164
Danay@eoc.sc.gov
Ellen Shuler



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The South Carolina Center for Children's Books and Literacy (SCCCBL) is an outreach program of the *University of SC School of Library and Information Science*. It is designed to enhance existing literacy programs, provide literacy research specific to South Carolina, and train teachers and daycare workers, parents and others.

The *SC Education Oversight Committee* is an independent, non-partisan group made up of 18 educators, business persons, and elected leaders who are appointed by the General Assembly. Created in 1998, the committee is dedicated to reporting facts, measuring change, and promoting progress within South Carolina's education system.